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ATLANTIC COAST  
MIGRATORY MOVEMENT

1944

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C. W. E. PITTMAN  
SOUTHEASTERN AREA DIRECTOR  
RECRUITMENT AND PLACEMENT DIVISION  
EXTENSION FARM LABOR PROGRAM

WAR FOOD ADMINISTRATION  
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

JUL 29 1945

798(5-45)



MIGRATORY AGRICULTURAL LABOR  
ON THE  
ATLANTIC SEABORD

C. W. E. Pittman  
Southeastern Area Director  
Recruitment and Placement Division  
Extension Farm Labor Program

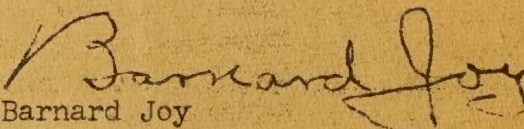
War Food Administration  
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Foreword

The so-called "migrant problem" is not a simple one. It is not unusual for those concerned with it to confine their observations to a single area and fail to understand the interrelationships of several areas in which the same migrants are employed.

The information included in this circular has been assembled as a byproduct of the program to assist workers in obtaining employment and to assist employers in obtaining workers. Much additional information needs to be assembled by research techniques. Despite the lack of data on some aspects of the situation, this circular is issued because of the importance of mutual understanding among interdependent areas and among workers, employers, and private, State, and Federal agencies.

C. W. E. Pittman, the author, has been associated with the migratory movement on the Atlantic Coast since 1937. Before joining the Extension Service staff in 1943 he had been field supervisor, farm labor supervisor in North Carolina, and farm labor supervisor for Region IV for the United States Employment Service. His duties in these positions and in his present position have provided the opportunity for personal acquaintance with many migrants. He also knows a considerable number of the farmers employing migrants, and the county and local personnel of the Extension Service and Employment Service from Florida to New York. In 1944, as the Federal Extension representative coordinating the State and local efforts to facilitate the movement, he at all times gave full consideration to the problems of the workers, to the needs of farmer-employers and to the national need for food.

  
Barnard Joy

Chief, Recruitment and Placement Division  
Extension Farm Labor Program



## MIGRATORY AGRICULTURAL LABOR on the ATLANTIC SEABOARD

For many years the vegetable, fruit, and berry growers of the Atlantic seaboard have had the use of a self-recruited and self-transported mobile labor force. Thousands of harvest hands come to hundreds of growers at just the time they are most needed. Many growers found it desirable to write letters during the winter and early spring to the group leaders of these workers and so maintain an already established employment relationship. Some growers also found it useful as well as agreeable to visit certain southern production areas and make personal contact with workers. Sometimes it was necessary to advance money for the purchase of new tires or for repairs to vehicles. However, the movement in the main has been self-recruited and self-transported. This mobile labor force of self-starters harvested from 40 to 60 percent of the "flash" crops grown in the Atlantic States from Florida through New York.

### Migration as a Labor Pattern

Migration is an answer to an age-old problem. How can a working force adequate for production be increased to do the tasks of harvest? Peak seasonal labor need is a fundamental characteristic of many types of agricultural production. However, not all harvests occur simultaneously. Crops mature for harvest in a south-north succession of areas. A migratory labor force is a means of attaining a fluctuating labor supply to match a fluctuating labor demand. Because of this, the production of an area can be at the high level of what its local labor force can cultivate rather than at the low level of what it can harvest. Migratory movements are natural in the sense that they arose out of the need of farmers and farm workers to solve employment problems for themselves. However, the process of transferring workers from areas of low demand to areas of high demand is by no means automatic.

### Origin and Developments of the East Coast Migration

The advent of quick transportation and refrigeration has freed the consumption of fresh fruits from space and time limits. Fresh Florida vegetables find immediate market outlets in areas 2,000 miles distant. Consumers everywhere find fresh fruits and vegetables available 12 months of the year instead of 3. These facts have had a profound effect on dietary habits and on the demand for and production of vegetables, fruits, and berries. One effect has been the development along the Atlantic seaboard of a series of areas of highly concentrated vegetable production so spaced as to provide a continuous flow of freshly matured products to the great city markets. The correlation of maturity dates with temperature change from south to north, spaces these commercial production areas and fixes the fundamental pattern of the migration of workers on the Atlantic Coast. Since volume of production years ago passed the point where an adequate supply of local workers was available, workers from the outside have been an important supplement to the local labor force.



While labor shortage was developing in the vegetable and fruit areas, other developments were taking place in the Southeastern States. Population pressures were building up in rural areas, and farm jobs were not increasing. Technological changes in farm operations, though much less extensive than in many other areas, were slowly decreasing the number of workers needed. Crop-production programs affecting tobacco and cotton and peanuts were also playing a part in a chain of circumstances that were circumscribing job opportunities. In addition to these difficult situations on the farms themselves, the lumbering industry was rapidly contracting because of forest depletion, and large numbers of woods and sawmill workers were finding themselves without employment. Share-croppers, wage hands, and forest workers were finding employment more and more uncertain.

Thus two forces played upon the rural workers of the Southeast, a pressure from contracting employment opportunities in tobacco and cotton areas and a pull from expanding job opportunities in the areas of highly commercialized vegetable, fruit, and berry production. Many southern farm workers, of necessity, exchanged the certainty of underemployment in their home communities for the uncertainty of unanchored living.

"Chain" farming early became an important factor in the actual establishment of the migratory pattern. When the overcoming of transportation difficulties opened up Florida muck lands, vegetable producers from older areas came in. The same producers could readily grow a winter crop in Florida and a summer crop in New Jersey or New York. This type of dual-area operation provided a ladder for the northward climb of the movement. In addition, many northern employers, with expanding operations, visited southern areas and directly recruited workers. Many workers, once having experienced the relatively higher wage structures of northern areas, became labor recruiters. However, in the main, the movement grew from worker initiative. Once the trail had been blazed, hundreds of small groups in "jalopies" took to the highways and quickly established for themselves a series of employment relationships that took them year after year into the same areas. Usually they returned to the same employers by virtue of tentative employment agreements made from one season to the next. By the beginning of the war fully one-half of the peak harvest work in some of the areas of concentrated production was done by southern migrants. This mobile labor force had reached approximately 25,000 in the period 1938-41. Without it the east coast vegetable industry could not have attained its present development.

#### General Characteristics

The Atlantic Coast migratory movement is closely bound to the intricate social and economic life in which it operates and is not a clear-cut entity either as to composition or operation. The generalized characteristics are not intended to identify a homogeneous group operating in accordance with a uniform pattern, but rather a mingled group of individuals manifesting varying degrees of compliance with the described pattern.



The migration as discussed is not limited to the unrecruited workers moving through a succession of different areas of employment on their own initiative that are considered "migrants" in the narrower meaning of that term, but also includes recruited workers moving from one State to another that are ordinarily considered "interstate" workers. It does not, however, include the domestic or foreign workers transported at Government expense.

Previous to the war, the migration consisted of the movement of about 25,000 farm workers in the spring from farm work in Southeastern States to farm work in Northeastern States and a similar movement in the fall in the opposite direction. This seasonal movement, which in total extent covers some 2,500 miles, enables these farm workers to take advantage of the relatively high wages for "seasonal" employment for from 10 to 12 months of the year rather than the lower wages paid "year-round" workers. Winter employment is found mainly in Florida, while spring, summer, and fall work is principally in Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, and New York.

The migration is composed of men, women, and youth. In it are many family groups, including a considerable number of children of all ages. Data available on the 1944 migration indicate a composition of 55 percent men, 35 percent women, and 10 percent youth. Almost all are negroes. The workers have a high degree of employment specialization. They seek harvest work in vegetables, fruits, and berries, and it is usually difficult to induce them to engage in general farm work. Ordinarily, they are not willing to work for a daily or hourly wage but prefer remuneration on a piecework basis.

An important characteristic of the movement is its group organization. This is an outgrowth of the mode of travel. In order to decrease the cost of transportation, by far the larger part of the workers travel in groups, by truck or passenger car. This permits the distribution of vehicle and fuel cost among several workers. Since individuals naturally feel dependent on their means of transportation, their freedom of action is, in a measure, restricted to group action. This places the owner or operator of the vehicle in a strategic position and out of this has grown a system of group leaders around whom individual workers cohere. This pattern of organization is of long standing and arose of itself out of the necessities inherent in the problem of seeking employment in a succession of areas extending for a thousand miles or more. It was developed by the workers themselves and, in the main, meets their needs in a manner satisfactory to themselves. Although this method of overcoming transportation difficulties is open to abuses, individual workers associate themselves voluntarily with a group of their own choosing, and if the choice proves to be bad, they can end the association at will.

Group leaders, in the main, fall into three categories. They are truck operators who are chiefly interested in hauling contracts and are transporting workers from area to area because having workers at their



disposal will enable them to keep their trucks at work; they are "crew bosses" who have recruited and transported workers and will receive payment for this from the growers to whom they are made available; or they are "contractors" who have recruited, transported, and will themselves employ and pay the workers they will use in harvesting crops at a stipulated price per unit.

### Impact of War

The war has had an important effect on this migratory movement. Even before the entrance of the United States into the war, pressure was removed from these workers. There were plenty of job opportunities in or near their home communities which were being drained of workers by industry and the Selective Service. As the tempo of war and production accelerated, these workers had the unaccustomed experience of being much sought. The scarcity of gasoline and tires and the uncertainties of rationing also influenced the situation. It took considerable faith to embark on a 2,000-mile trip that would entail the securing of gasoline and tires from strange rationing boards in strange areas.

By 1943, the number remaining in the migration had been reduced to about 30 percent of normal. The depletion of so important a labor source was a real threat to the specialized vegetable areas of the Atlantic Coast.

The State agricultural extension services and the War Food Administration, in the meantime, had been charged with the responsibility of assisting farmers to obtain farm labor. One of the many things to be done was to facilitate the Atlantic coast migratory movement to as full an extent as possible. The network of county agents stretching throughout all areas involved provided machinery for this assistance.

Early in 1944 the State farm labor supervisors of 10 of the Atlantic Seaboard States jointly evolved a program designed to revive and preserve the movement. As the 1944 season developed, this program was put into execution by State extension service personnel in most of the areas of production on the Atlantic Coast, and this effort was at least a contributing factor to an increase of nearly 100 percent in the number of migrants over the preceding season.

The operating principle has been the preservation of the existing patterns rather than the creation of new ones. Effort was concentrated chiefly upon two objectives: (1) The removal of obstacles to free movement and (2) the collection and distribution of information about job opportunities so as to reduce the amount of unprofitable travel in search of employment. Great care has been exerted to prevent disruption of the pattern of continuing employment relationships that exist between individual workers and employers.

The activities of the Extension Service were carried out through the State services with the Federal office coordinating effort into an integrated interstate operation. The major phases of the program were (1) facilitating the direct negotiation of employers in the North with potential workers in the South, (2) collecting information about work



available in areas just coming into production and distributing this information to workers in areas where harvests were nearing completion, (3) aiding workers in obtaining necessary gasoline and tires, and (4) accumulating information concerning the volume, direction, and timing of the flow of migrants for the information of farmers and Extension personnel.

The last two objectives were accomplished partly through the operation of two information stations, one near Wilmington, N. C., and the other at the ferry over Chesapeake Bay between Little Creek and Cape Charles, Va. Many of the workers pass through these points. Here Extension Service personnel interviewed the migrants, distributed information about areas needing workers, and obtained information about the migrants and their destinations. Much additional information was collected by Extension personnel who interviewed migrants in the production areas. Some of the information collected is presented in the following sections.

### The Employment Areas

The areas of employment that are the theaters of operations of the Atlantic Coast migrants dot a 1,100-mile stretch of the coastal region. The areas themselves are each comparatively small and rarely involved enough acreage to offer employment to many workers for more than a short period of intensive harvest work. None of them can utilize for 12 months all the workers they must have for the 1 to 3 months of peak activity. The areas are rather widely spaced when north-south distance is considered. The east-west spacing is much less. The north-south spacing has been conditioned largely by market demands that could be best met by a series of production areas so spaced that the succession of maturity dates would keep markets supplied with a continuous stream of fresh products, with a minimum of competition between areas. The accompanying map (figure 1) locates the more important areas and indicates maturity dates of the chief crops.

### Worker Sources

If we conceive of spring as the beginning of the annual migration, then Florida is the source of by far the largest number of workers. During the spring of 1944, at least three-fourths of the migrants started from Florida. With respect to the remainder, present records do not fix with certainty the points from which they left in the spring. However the following States are known to have contributed to this group, and the order in which the States are listed probably reflects the relative sizes of their contingent; Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia. Even though most workers begin their annual migration from Florida, it is more accurate to consider Florida as one of a series of areas of employment where the workers have the longest employment, rather than as the source of workers.







The specific sources from which the movement is renewed are not easily identified. Children are born in the movement and many doubtless remain in it. However, in the absence of dependable data, no reliable conclusions can be reached as to the extent to which the movement reproduces itself. Observation, and such data as are available, indicates that all the States of the Southeast have contributed to the movement and it is probably safe to conclude that these contributions continue. It is known that the itinerary of many groups include side trips to visit relatives in all the Southeastern States.

Within the southeastern areas that maintain this migration, there is a corollary movement within an industry allied to agriculture. Tobacco processing workers in the fall move up from Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina to winter work in the tobacco stemming and redrying plants of North Carolina and Virginia. This work ends in the early spring, and some of these industrial workers enter the Atlantic Coast migration for summer work. In general they seem to prefer employment in processing plants to field work.

#### The Movement of Workers

Many migrants, as they go North, will work for 1 to 6 weeks in two to four different production areas. Others will customarily have only two places of employment--one in the South for the winter and the other in the North for the summer.

The movement itself can perhaps best be pictured as a stream that begins as a trickle in March and is swollen to flood proportions by a series of freshets during the late spring and early summer months and finally ends as a trickle in late summer. For instance, the ending of the bean season in the Belle Glade areas of Florida unlooses a flood during the last half of May, while completion of the Carolina potato harvest early in July causes another freshet that sweeps on into Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, and New Jersey.

This concept of the movement, however, should be supplemented by visualizing the movement in its over-all aspects as a progression up the coast interrupted by work periods in three or four areas and a straight movement back down the coast with little or no work en route.

Since we have accepted the spring departure of workers from Florida as the beginning of the annual itinerary, the following table indicating the timing of the flow out of that State in 1944 is of interest.



Table 1.—Date of leaving and first destination of workers who left Florida in 1944

(The figures for migrants leaving Florida are based on information given by those migrants who asked county agents to identify them to OPA rationing boards. Since not all migrants requested this identification, the figures do not include all who left Florida. Neither do the figures given on destinations indicate all migrants entering those areas, since only first destinations after leaving Florida are given.)

Areas	April				May				June				July				Total
Weeks	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	
Belle Glade																	
Pompano	6	18	79	336	208	546	1,507	1,373	2,056	1,300	503	236	21	11			8,200
South Date																	
Sanford-Oviedo																	
Hastings		5			53		257	201	556	198	222	87	221	42	24		1,866
La Crosse																	
Fort Pierce																	
Indian River							31	186	97	75	6						395
Interior Citrus																	
Manatee-Sarasota																	
Fort Myers						1		240	39	109	302	80	10	39			820
Total	6	23	79	336	261	547	1,795	2,000	2,748	1,682	1,033	403	252	92	24		11,281

The first destinations of 6,545 of the above migrants leaving Florida are known with sufficient certainty to allow construction of the following table:

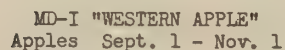
<u>Destination by State</u>			
Georgia.....	179	Pennsylvania.....	107
South Carolina.....	68	Massachusetts.....	34
North Carolina.....	2,088	Ohio.....	22
Virginia.....	455	Michigan.....	21
Maryland.....	283	Minnesota.....	19
Delaware.....	173	Rhode Island.....	12
New Jersey.....	624	Other Florida points.....	154
New York.....	2,306	Total.....	6,545



# ATLANTIC COAST MIGRATION OF AGRICULTURAL WORKERS

## Production Areas, Crops, Maturity Dates

*Dates are average.*



VA-I "VALLEY"  
Peaches Aug. 1 - Aug. 20  
Apples Sept. 15 - Nov. 15

VA-II "EASTERN SHORE"  
 Strawberries May 1 - June 15  
 Beans-early June 1 - July 1  
 Beans-late Sept.15-Nov. 10  
 Potatoes June 10-July 10  
 Tomatoes June 20-Aug. 25

VA-III "NORFOLK"

Strawberries	May 10 - June 15
Beans	June 1 - July 1
Potatoes	June 10-July 20

N.C.-V "SANDHILL PEACHES"  
Peaches July 25 - Aug. 20

N.C.-VI "HENDERSONVILLE"  
Beans July 1 - Oct. 10

S.C.-I "SPARTANBURG"  
Peaches July 25 - Aug. 10

GA-I "MIDDLE PEACH"  
Peaches July 5 - July 25

GA-II "SOUTH PEACH"  
Peaches June 20 - July 10

GA-IV "MOULTRIE"  
Plants April 20 - June 1

GA-V "VALDOSTA"  
Plants April 20 - June 1

FLA-I "LACROSS"  
Potatoes April 20-June 10

FLA-IV "INTERIOR CITRUS"  
Citrus Nov. 1 - June 1

FLA-VII "MANATEE-SARASOTA"  
Tomatoes & Nov. 15 - June 15  
mixed  
vegetables  
Celery Jan. 1 - May 10

FLA-VIII "FORT MYERS"  
Citrus Nov. 1 - June 1

N.Y.-II "CENTRAL NEW YORK"	
Beans	July 10 - Sept. 30
Onions	Aug. 1 - Sept. 20
Celery	Aug. 15 - Oct. 30
Potatoes	Sept. 15 - Oct. 30

N.Y.-III "HUDSON VALLEY"	
Cherries	July 15 - July 30
Mixed vegetables	July 15 - Oct. 15
Peaches	Aug. 15 - Sept. 10
Pears	Aug. 15 - Aug. 30
Apples	Sept. 1 - Oct. 25

N.Y.-IV "LONG ISLAND"	
Potatoes	Aug. 1 - Sept. 30
Mixed vegetables	Aug. 10 - Sept. 15
Cauliflower	Oct. 15 - Dec. 1

N.J.-I "MIDDLE JERSEY"

Fruit	July 5 - Sept. 15
Potatoes	July 20 - Sept. 15

N.J.-II "LOWER JERSEY"	
Asparagus	May 1 - July 1
Beans-early	June 15 - July 15
Beans-late	Sept. 15 - Oct. 15
Fruit	July 5 - Sept. 15
Tomatoes	July 10 - Oct. 1

"DELAWARE"	
Asparagus	May 10 - June 15
Snap beans	July 1 - Aug. 1
Peaches	July 20 - Aug. 20
Tomatoes	July 20 - Sept. 10

MD-II "EASTERN SHORE"

Asparagus	April 20-June 15
Beans-early	June 15 - July 16
Beans-late	Aug. 15- Nov. 15
Potatoes	July 1 - Aug. 1
Tomatoes	July 10 - Sept. 1

N.C.-I "ELIZABETH CITY"  
Beans May 20 - June 15  
Potatoes June 10 - July 15

N.C.-II "COLUMBIA"  
Potatoes June 10 - July 1

N.C.-III "AURORA-BAYBORO"  
Potatoes June 5 - June 25

N.C.-IV "MT. OLIVE"  
Beans        May 25 - June 15  
Potatoes    June 1 - June 20

N.C.-VII "BEAUFORT"

Beans	May 25 - June 10
Potatoes	June 1 - June 20

N.C.-VIII "CASTLE HAYNE"  
Beans May 25 - June 10

S.C.-II "RIDGE PEACHES"  
Peaches July 15 - Aug. 5

S.C.-III "CHARLESTON"

Beans-early	April 15-June 15
Beans-late	Oct. 10 - Nov. 15
Potatoes	May 15 - June 15
Tomatoes	May 15 - June 30
Cucumbers	May 25 - June 30

S.C.-IV "BEAUFORT"

Beans-early	April 15-May 15
Beans-late	Oct. 15-Nov. 15
Potatoes	May 15 - June 15
Tomatoes	May 25 - June 30

GA-III "CLAXTON"  
Plants April 20 - June 1

FLA-II "HASTINGS"  
Potatoes April 1 - June 1

FLA.-III "SANFORD-OVEIDO"  
Celery Jan. 20 - June 1

FLA-V "INDIAN RIVER CITRUS"  
Citrus Nov. 1 - June 1

FLA-VI "FORT PIERCE"  
Tomatoes Nov. 15 - Jan. 1  
April 1 - June 1  
Citrus Nov. 1 - June 1

FLA-IX "BELLE GLADE"				
	Sept.	15	-	May 15
Beans	"	"	"	"
Potatoes	"	"	"	"
Celery	"	"	"	"
Cabbage	"	"	"	"

FLA-X "POMPANON"				
Beans	Nov.	26	-	May 20
Peppers	"	"	"	"
Tomatoes	"	"	"	"

FLA.-XI "SOUTH DADE  
Tomatoes Dec. 10 - Apr. 15  
Potatoes " " " "  
Beans " " " "







The number of migrants working in each State is not accurately known. Even where the most nearly complete records are available no one is sure that all groups were interviewed. Many entered an area and worked a few days while waiting for the crops in another area to mature. The best estimates available are the summaries of individual itineraries that have been collected by the Federal Extension office. These include records for 1,377 groups, each showing the itineraries as given by them when interviewed. A sample record is as follows:

Group leader	: Place of : Interview	: Number : workers:	: Date of : interview	: Destination : given
Ira Tossie	: Sanford, Fla.	: 103	: June 1	: Aurora, N.C.
	: Wilmington, N.C.	: 103	: June 10	: Aurora, N.C.
	: Little Creek, Va.	: 103	: July 23	: Cranbury, N.J.
	: Cranbury, N.J.	: 95	: Sept. 15	: Presque Isle, Me.
	:	:	:	: Oviedo, Fla. -
	:	:	:	: 10/20

From these data, it appears that Ira Tossie left the Sanford-Oviedo area of Florida about June 1, saying that he was going to Aurora, N.C. He passed the Wilmington Information Station on June 10, again giving Aurora as his destination. On July 23, he passed the Little Creek Information Station giving Cranbury, N. J., as his destination. On September 15 he was interviewed at Cranbury, N. J., and declared an intention of going to Presque Isle, Maine, and returning to Florida about October 10. Though this record does not actually establish it as a fact that this group worked in North Carolina or in Maine, it seems reasonable to accept such an assumption.

The assumption that most workers do carry out their intentions of working in the areas they name as destinations is an element to be given weight in considering the data in Table 2. However, the table is based in part on interviews actually taken within the areas given as destinations. The table, however, is indicative rather than statistically accurate. The total number that worked in all the States is naturally larger than the actual number of migrants, since many groups worked in two or more States.

Table 2. — Approximate number of migrants working in each State or giving that state as a destination

New York	7,300	South Carolina	125
New Jersey	6,300	Michigan	100
North Carolina	5,800	Maine	100
Virginia	3,750	Massachusetts	35
Maryland	2,600	Rhode Island	25
Delaware	850	Minnesota	20
Georgia	250	Ohio	20
Pennsylvania	180		



Figure 2 shows the weekly flow past the Wilmington and the Little Creek Information Stations during the spring and summer of 1944. From this record, it appears that the second week of June finds the largest number actually moving over the highways. During this week last year 2,318 were interviewed at the two information stations.

By far the larger number travel by truck. Of 10,830 leaving Florida in 1944 whose method of travel is known, 8,840 traveled by truck and 1,990 traveled by passenger car.

Most travel in groups of from 10 to 30. Thirteen percent travel in "family size" groups. Table 3, based on the records of 6,610 passing the Little Creek Information Station, gives data on the size of the groups in transit. It should be noted, however, that the actual working crew organization may not be pictured here since travel groups often combine or split for employment.

Table 3 — Size of groups interviewed at Little Creek Information Station

<u>Size of group</u>	<u>Number of groups</u>	<u>Number of individuals</u>	<u>Percentage of workers</u>
1-5	226	813	13
6-10	100	764	12
11-20	90	1,418	22
21-30	55	1,407	21
31-40	28	983	15
41-50	9	435	6
51-75	7	486	7
76 or larger	3	304	4
	<u>518</u>	<u>6,610</u>	<u>100</u>

#### Number in the Migration

The total number of migratory agricultural workers who engaged in seasonal work on the Atlantic seaboard is not known. Contacts with 14,703 were reported by the Extension Service during 1944. As these workers were interviewed at different places every effort was made to eliminate duplications. However, some workers may have been included more than once. These figures do not represent the magnitude of the movement in its entirety, for many were not interviewed and not all interviews were reported. Fifteen thousand is probably a minimum figure for 1944.

#### Future of the Movement

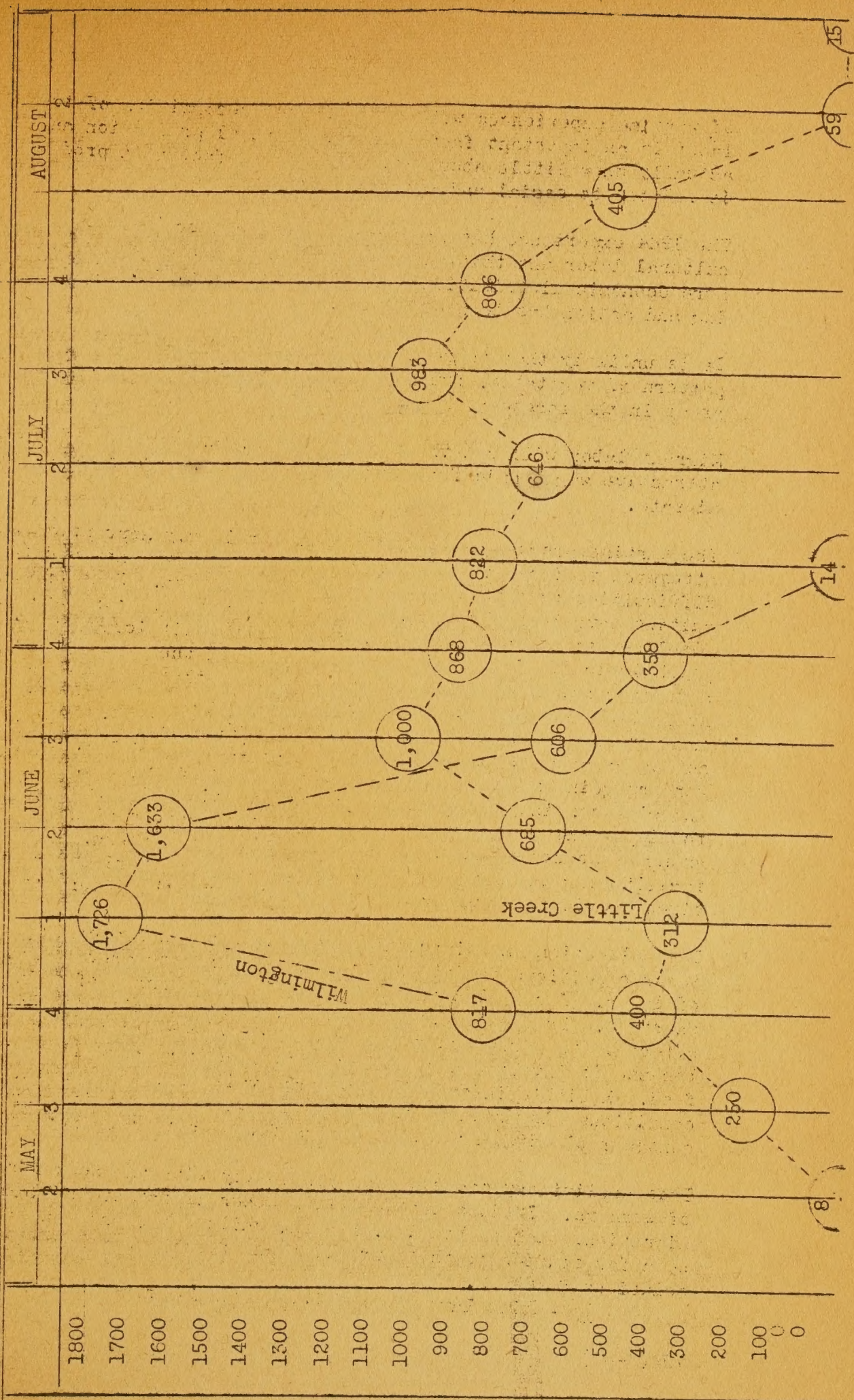
For the duration of the war, labor will continue to be a critical factor in agricultural production. Perhaps one of the enduring benefits



FIGURE 2

FLOW OF MIGRATORY STREAM

Number of Workers Passing Information Stations Each Week





of wartime experiences will be a general recognition of the fact that labor is an important factor in agricultural production and that we actually know little about it, either as a factor in production or as it relates to social and economic problems.

The 1944 experience has proved that much can be learned about agricultural labor and that much can be done toward the attainment of a more economic distribution and efficient use of it. Intelligent planning and action has been effective.

It is unlikely that there will be any material modification in the present pattern of vegetable, fruit, and berry production in the Atlantic Coast areas in the foreseeable future.

Migrant labor will continue to be needed, and because of the relatively attractive wages paid for harvest operations, workers will continue to migrate.

The wartime program under the Farm Labor Supply Appropriation Act 1/ has attempted to facilitate desirable migratory movements and to reduce the difficulties that tend to retard such migration. Some of these difficulties have been physical, resulting from the wartime scarcity of gasoline, tires, and vehicles. Some of the difficulties have been psychological. In all areas dependent upon the same source of labor for harvest work, there is likely to be a fear that the workers will not be available when needed. This frequently results in a desire to have the workers remain in the area during periods when the need for them is not so great as it is in other areas. In other cases, it results in workers going to an area earlier than they are needed. It has been and will continue to be an important function of a farm labor program to dispel this fear by establishing mutual cooperation and understanding among areas dependent upon the same group of workers. This helps in facilitating the movement of workers among the various areas at such times and in such numbers as will best serve the interests of all.

The collection and distribution of information concerning crop and labor conditions in interrelated areas tends to prevent maldistribution of labor. Such maldistribution has the appearance of being an actual shortage. From an economic standpoint, maldistribution has a worse effect in the areas currently needing the workers than an actual shortage because it involves underemployment of workers as well as the loss of food. Reliable information on work available, wages paid, and living conditions also reduces the time that will be lost if migrants travel considerable distances in a search for jobs that do not exist.

This preliminary study deals principally with the need for and movement of workers. It does not deal with other important problems involved in migration, such as housing, health, child care, and education. There is need for studies of these problems and for the development of practical solutions for them.

1/ Public Laws 229 and 529 (78th Congress).